



Director of
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BRIEFS AND COMMENTS

IRAN: New Foreign Minister

Ebrahim Yazdi, appointed yesterday as Foreign Minister, seems likely to provide more direction to Iran's new "Islamic" foreign policy. Yazdi has resigned his post as Deputy Prime Minister for Revolutionary Affairs, but it is not clear yet whether he no longer has responsibility for supervising revolutionary committees and forming a new national guard.

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//Yazdi enjoys the confidence of Ayatollah Khomeini and is likely to move aggressively to reorganize the Foreign Ministry.

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Like other leaders of the revolution, Yazdi believes that the Islamic uprising in Iran should set an example for the rest of the Muslim world, but he has emphasized that he does not favor exporting revolution to other countries. He is strongly opposed to Israel and is pro-Palestinian and can be expected to push hard for Palestinian rights.

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//Yazdi spent 16 of the past 18 years in the US and has US citizenship. He has been considered pro-American by his US friends, but he now seems suspicious of US intentions and motivations toward Iran.//

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LEBANON: Rising Tensions

A series of recent developments has increased tensions throughout Lebanon and set back prospects for an understanding between the Syrians and major Maronite Christian groups that would permit political reconstruction to move forward. [Redacted]

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Relations between the Syrians and the two largest Christian groups--the Phalange Party and the National Liberal Party--have deteriorated since last week when Major Haddad, the Christian militia leader in southern Lebanon, proclaimed a "Free Lebanon" in the Christian-controlled enclave along the Israeli border. In a statement issued on Monday, the two Christian parties justified the declaration as the "natural result" of the Syrian and Palestinian "occupation" of Lebanon. [Redacted]

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In northern Lebanon, the leaders of the Phalangist and National Liberal Party militias have publicly threatened to take action against the pro-Syrian Christian faction of former President Sulayman Franjiyah in retaliation for attacks by Franjiyah's forces on members of the Phalange last weekend. If the Phalangists move against Franjiyah's militia--as is likely--Syrian troops may be drawn in. [Redacted]

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The tense situation is further complicated by continuing clashes between the Palestinians and Israelis. The Israelis yesterday attacked Palestinian camps and positions in southern Lebanon for the third straight day with airstrikes and artillery. Israeli patrol boats also exchanged fire with Palestinian shore batteries. The escalating exchanges could culminate in a more concerted Israeli military action in southern Lebanon.

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RHODESIA: Election Results

The transitional government's success in getting over half of Rhodesia's eligible voters to the polls will strengthen the government's case in seeking international recognition and a lifting of sanctions. We have no reports of any significant electoral irregularities, and there was no appreciable increase in guerrilla activity during the five-day election period last week.

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Bishop Muzorewa won an impressive victory; his party gained 51 seats--an absolute majority--in the new parliament. Although the Bishop is being hailed as the new prime minister, officially that office will not be filled until late May or early June when a prime minister will be appointed by a president elected by the new parliament. Reverend Sithole, whose party won only 12 seats, has charged "gross irregularities" in the election and has demanded an investigation, although his charges probably will not be substantiated by the investigation for which Sithole has called. Sithole and Chief Ndiweni, whose Ndebele-based party won nine seats, both should be assured cabinet posts. Chief Chirau, considered by many a stooge of the whites, did not win a seat.

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Guerrilla operations during the election apparently were limited to attacking scattered polling places, laying land mines that caused a number of civilian casualties, and forcing black civilians in several rural areas into the countryside to prevent them from voting. Failure to disrupt the election can be attributed in large part to recent, extensive Rhodesian raids on guerrilla camps in neighboring states and the security provided by the estimated 85,000 security force personnel, reservists, and black auxiliaries the government mobilized for the election.

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Rhodesian claims that 63.9 percent of the voting population went to the polls are somewhat inflated because they are based on an estimated black electorate of only 2.8 million. Nevertheless, even assuming the highest estimate of 3.5 million eligible black voters, the turnout was over 50 percent.

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SPAIN: Left's Control of Local Politics

Collaboration between the Socialist and Communist Parties at the local level threatens to polarize Spanish politics, with the left holding the reins of power in the major cities and most provincial capitals and the Center Democrats in charge at the national level. Concern is growing in the government and on the right that the left's unity could carry over into the national arena.

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A formal pact between the Socialists and Communists enabled the left to capture the municipal administrations representing well over half of the population, including almost all principal urban areas. In Madrid, for example, the Socialist-Communist pact gave the mayoralty and all other administrative positions to the left even though the Center Democrats edged out the Socialists in total number of votes.

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Although a Socialist spokesman has sought to counter criticism by pointing out that the pact involved no common program and was open to other leftist parties--and particularly to regional groupings--the Center Democrats are emphasizing that voters were not told in advance of the agreement.

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The national government still has a weapon at its disposal. Parliament will soon take up the revision of laws allocating power to the municipalities, and in the legislature the Center Democrats--only eight seats short of a majority--will have the dominant voice. The government may attempt to strike a bargain by offering revisions that would enhance the powers of the local governments in return for Socialist collaboration on a number of other pressing problems such as regional autonomy, economic planning, and labor reforms. The Socialists, whose link to the Communists is also evident in growing cooperation in the labor field, may want to keep open some lines to the government.

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TURKEY: Martial Law Issue

The Turkish Government yesterday asked parliament to extend martial law for another two months and add six more provinces to the 13 currently covered. To a large extent, Premier Ecevit's move reflects political necessity. Pressures from more conservative cabinet ministers and the military's concern about Kurdish separatism outweigh the influence of leftists who supported Ecevit's past efforts to limit martial law. The joint vote in the houses of parliament tomorrow on this recommendation will be extremely close, since the opposition is united against the government and Ecevit's Kurdish and leftist supporters may abstain in protest.

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In justifying the government's decision, Ecevit alluded yesterday to the steady level of violence and to the Kurdish separatist threat. While there have been isolated incidents between Kurds and security forces in the six eastern provinces that would be placed under martial law, public violence has been more evident in other provinces--including those already under martial law. Many observers had expected that Izmir Province, a leftist stronghold in western Turkey, would be placed under martial law because of the upsurge there in violent incidents and the assassination of a US serviceman. Ecevit's exclusion of Izmir is probably a concession to his party's left wing.

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UGANDA: New Government's Progress

The new government appears somewhat unsure of itself as it moves cautiously toward restoring Uganda to the relative prosperity and respect it enjoyed in the 1960s. The administration is appealing to its citizens to resume normal daily activity, taking steps to expand civil rights, and awaiting outside aid to revive the economy. [Redacted]

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Some military activity is continuing, but the Tanzanian Army--the only effective military force in Uganda--is unlikely to encounter much organized resistance from pro-Amin forces as it moves deeper into the country. The new government does not control some 150 kilometers of the vital road from Jinja to the Kenyan border, or the less populous and less productive northern two-thirds of the country. Damage from fighting and looting is probably concentrated in the main cities. [Redacted]

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President Lule is permitting the disparate members of his cabinet to make their own pronouncements on issues of special concern to them. Officials probably are being appointed without coordination, and probably numerous political fiefdoms are being built. Neighborhood spokesmen were chosen in open assemblies last weekend in the Kampala area in a rudimentary election billed as a forerunner of a full democratic system. [Redacted]

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Close African allies of Tanzania and British Commonwealth countries have led a trend toward diplomatic recognition of the new government, though many African countries are reluctant to endorse a change of government made possible by outside military force in violation of a major principle of the Organization of African Unity. Lule and his associates are actively seeking support from Western states and international organizations. There is no evidence, however, of approaches to or by Communist countries. [Redacted]

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Kenya, which controls Uganda's lifelines, appears to be overcoming its initial mistrust and has accepted a visit from Foreign Minister Alimadi. Bilateral issues--debt settlements and credit arrangements, treatment of anti-Amin exiles and pro-Amin refugees, and extradition and punishment of Amin's henchmen--are the issues likely to dominate Uganda's relations with Kenya and most other African countries for the next few years. [Redacted]

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ARGENTINA: Arrest of Labor Leaders

The government arrested 20 of Argentina's top labor leaders on Monday after they appealed to workers to observe a national "day of protest" on Friday against government economic policies. The planned action, the most significant labor challenge to the military regime since it seized power in March 1976, is also intended to protest proposed government revisions of labor and social welfare legislation, which the unions see as an attempt to destroy their traditional political and economic power. In addition, workers are disturbed over a continuing ban on union activities and the arrest in recent months of labor leaders without formal charges. The government apparently hopes to head off serious labor unrest through arrests and selective wage increases. Friday's planned strike will provide a major test of that policy.

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ETHIOPIA-USSR: Aid Protocol

//Under a protocol signed in Addis Ababa on 14 April, Moscow has allocated to specific projects some of the \$90 million of unused credits extended to Ethiopia as part of an aid agreement concluded 20 years ago. This is the first formal allocation of Soviet economic aid to Ethiopia since Chairman Mengistu visited Moscow last November. The new protocol provides for two grain silos and a number of warehouses, agricultural machinery repair shops, cold storage plants, and related facilities. Although Mengistu is said to expect more than \$2 billion in new Soviet aid, there is no hard evidence that the Soviets plan to offer large new amounts when the first Soviet-Ethiopian economic commission meets later this spring.//

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ALGERIA-MAURITANIA: High-Level Visit

Press reports from Mauritania indicate a high-level Algerian delegation--including two Army officers--visited Nouakchott briefly early this week for private talks with Mauritanian Prime Minister Bouceif. The unusual visit--diplomatic relations between Algeria and Mauritania have been broken since 1976 because of the dispute over Western Sahara--suggests an Algerian effort to arrange a deal, at Morocco's expense, between the Mauritians and the West Saharan nationalists of the Algerian-backed Polisario Front. Nouakchott would welcome restoration of ties with Algiers--a prospect reportedly raised by the Algerian delegation--but Bouceif has said publicly that Mauritania will not conclude a West Saharan peace agreement without Morocco. One press account nonetheless speculated that a Mauritanian delegation would soon meet Polisario representatives in an unspecified African capital.

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